

## Sandy Park Development Center

**Policy #: 77**

**Effective Date: 10/09/2020**

**Department: All**

**Revision Date(s):**

**Topic: Visitation Guidelines During COVID-19**

**Page(s): 5**

### **Purpose:**

While the facility has focused on protecting the clients from COVID-19, we recognize that physical separation from family and other loved ones has taken a physical and emotional toll on our clients. Clients may feel socially isolated, leading to increased risk for depression, anxiety, and other expressions of distress. Clients living with cognitive impairment or other disabilities may find visitor restrictions and other ongoing changes related to COVID-19 confusing and upsetting. We understand that our clients derive value from the physical, emotional and spiritual support they receive through visitation from family and friends.

### **Guidance:**

Visitation can be conducted through different means based on a facility's structure and clients' needs, such as in client rooms, dedicated visitation spaces, outdoors, and for circumstances beyond compassionate care situations. Regardless of how visits are conducted, there are certain core principles and best practices that reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission. Therefore the following will be adhered to:

- The **Core Principles of COVID-19 Infection Prevention** are met. These Core Principles are as follows:
  - Screening of all who enter the facility for signs and symptoms of COVID-19 (e.g., temperature checks, questions or observations about signs or symptoms), and denial of entry of those with signs or symptoms
  - Hand hygiene (use of alcohol-based hand rub is preferred)
  - Face covering or mask (covering mouth and nose)
  - Social distancing at least six feet between persons
  - Instructional signage throughout the facility and proper visitor education on COVID-19 signs and symptoms, infection control precautions, other applicable facility practices (e.g., use of face covering or mask, specified entries, exits and routes to designated area, hand hygiene)
  - Cleaning and disinfecting high frequency touched surfaces in the facility often, and designated visitation areas after each visit
  - Appropriate staff use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
  - Effective cohorting of clients (e.g., separate areas dedicated COVID-19 care)
  - Client and staff testing as required at 42 CFR 483.80(h)
  
- the COVID-19 county positivity rate, found on the COVID-19 Nursing Home Data site is used to determine how to facilitate indoor visitation:

- Low (<5%) = Visitation should occur according to the core principles of COVID-19 infection prevention and facility policies (beyond compassionate care visits)
  - Medium (5% - 10%) = Visitation should occur according to the core principles of COVID-19 infection prevention and facility policies (beyond compassionate care visits)
  - High (>10%) = Visitation should only occur for compassionate care situations according to the core principles of COVID-19 infection prevention and facility policies
- no new onset of COVID-19 cases in the last 14 days;
  - the facility is not experiencing staff shortages;
  - adequate supplies of PPE and essential cleaning and disinfection supplies are available; and
  - referral hospital(s) have bed capacity on wards and intensive care units.

**Note:** *Indoor visitation may be restricted if any of the above conditions are not met.*

### **Guidelines for Indoor Visitation**

1. External groups visits (i.e., singers, entertainment) will be limited if possible and activities should be conducted outdoors at this time.
2. Social services or designated staff will notify families by telephone and/or letter regarding the visitation guidelines that are to be followed. Visitors will be required to sign an agreement in advance stating that they will follow all guidelines for visitation.
3. All visits must be scheduled in advance to ensure that the designated visitation area and staff are available for monitoring.
4. Signs will be posted at the entrance with instructions for visitors to be screened before entering the facility.
5. All visitors will have their temperature taken and be screened for COVID-19 symptoms. Anyone with a fever equal to or greater than 100.0 degrees Fahrenheit, cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, myalgia, chills or new onset of loss of taste or smell will not be allowed to visit a person. If a visitor has fever and/or any COVID-19 symptoms or exposure to a known COVID-19 case, he/she will be asked to reschedule the visit.
6. Each visitor will be required to perform handwashing and/or use hand sanitizer. If hand sanitizer is used, the CDC recommends using Alcohol-Based Hand Rub (ABHR) with greater than 60% ethanol or 70% isopropanol.
7. Visits will be limited to one (1) hour or less.
8. Visitor's will be limited to two (2) people per client.
9. Visitation will be restricted to children 12 years of age or older. Visitors with children must be able to manage them, and children must be able to wear a face mask during the entire visitation. Special family circumstances warranting children under the age of 12 to visit can be approved by the facility.

10. Visitor must wear a cloth face covering or facemask for the duration of their visit. The person being visited should wear a mask as tolerated. Visitors should be responsible for bringing their own face mask/cloth face covering.
11. Social distancing of at least six feet will be practiced.
12. Visitors will be monitored by staff during the visit.
13. The visitation room will be disinfected after each visitation.
14. Visitors must stay in designated visitation locations.
15. The facility will rotate and schedule visits at specific times such that the total number of visitors present at any time does not exceed safe limits.
16. Visitation will only be allowed during 9:00AM–11:00AM and 2:00PM–4:00PM Monday thru Friday.
17. Visitors cannot eat during the visit but may provide food and beverage to the client consistent with dietary considerations.
18. If the facility is on quarantine or isolation visitation will not be allowed.
19. Any visitor who develops symptoms consistent with COVID-19 within 72 hours of a visit must notify the facility with 24 hours.
20. Violation of these guidelines by the visitor may result in revocation of visitation rights.
21. According to CDC, all healthcare workers and first responders are considered essential personnel; therefore, hospice, home health, therapists, nurses and dieticians may enter the facility if they are screened and follow infection control procedures.

### **Guidelines for Outdoor Visitation**

It is known that congregate settings provide opportunities for increased risk for the spread of COVID-19. However, recent data show that the risks of virus transmission are lower in outdoor settings. The facility has established visitor areas that are protected from weather elements, such as porches, patios and other covered areas, or have a space large enough to house a temporary tent. Outdoor visitation may occur regardless of a facility's outbreak status provided the following conditions are met.

1. The facility must monitor the temperature in any outdoor visitation area.
2. Visits should occur only on days when there are no weather warning that would put their visitors or persons at risk.
3. Adequate staff must be present to allow for personnel to help with outdoor transition of persons, monitoring of visitation, and cleaning and sanitizing areas after each visit.
4. Visitation areas must be cleaned and sanitized between visitations using an approved antiviral disinfectant. The visitation schedule must provide sufficient time in between visits for this process.
5. Visitors must participate in and pass the facility's screening process prior to each visit.
6. The facility screening process must include a screening questionnaire, which will record the identity of the client visited, date, name, address and phone number of the visitor and the facility must maintain these records so that they can be made available upon request by the Mississippi State Department of Health Bureau of Health Facilities Licensure and Certification or Office of Epidemiology.
7. The questionnaire will also include a declaration regarding signs and symptoms of infection, contact and/or exposure to known COVID-19 positive persons, and any prior testing for COVID-19, and a statement that the visitor will inform the facility immediately if they develop symptoms within 72 hours of visiting or test positive for COVID-19 after visiting.
8. Visitors must not have signs or symptoms of COVID-19 for at least three (3) days prior to a visit.
9. If any visitor previously tested positive for COVID-19, they must not visit within 14 days of a positive test.

10. Clients must wear a cloth face covering during the visit, if able, and all visitors must always adhere to physical distancing (at least 6 feet apart) during visits.
11. Clients must have the ability to safely transition from their room to an outdoor visitation location.
12. Visitor's will be limited to two (2) people per client.
13. Visitors must stay in designated outdoor visitation locations.
14. Visitation will be restricted to children 12 years of age or older. Visitors with children must be able to manage them, and children must be able to wear a face mask during the entire visitation. Special family circumstances warranting children under the age of 12 to visit can be approved by the facility.
15. Outdoor visitation will be rotated, and visitors must schedule visits in advance with the facility pursuant to the facility's scheduling process and available times.
16. The facility will rotate and schedule visits at specific times such that the total number of visitors present at any time does not exceed safe limits.
17. Visitation will only be allowed during select hours of each day as defined by the facility.
18. Visitation hours and limits will be determined by the facility's availability of outdoor space and the ability of staff to monitor for infection control measures.
19. The facility will ensure that hand sanitizer and extra facemasks are available.
20. Visitors must sanitize hands with an alcohol-based hand rub or by handwashing with soap and water when entering and exiting.
21. Visitors cannot eat during the visit but may provide food and beverage to the client consistent with dietary considerations.
22. The facility will monitor all visits carefully to ensure that masks are worn, and visitation policies are followed.

***If the facility cannot provide the necessary supervision of outdoor visits to prevent breeches in infection control requirements, the facility must suspend outdoor visitation.***

### **Guidelines for Home Visitation/Passes**

The facility will allow persons to have home visitation pass as long as the facility is not currently in active outbreak status (no new cases in the last 14 days past most recent onset of illness).

1. Passes for home visits must be requested via social services.
2. The client must have access to a mask and hand sanitizer provided by the family prior to pass issuance.
3. The family and client will be informed about potential risks when going into the community, including the risk of exposure to COVID-19 and the increased risk of introducing COVID-19 to the facility upon return. The facility will refer families to the COVID-19 county positivity rate found on the [COVID-19 Nursing Home Data](#) page to determine the rate in their county of residence and take the necessary precautions.
4. The client will be screened for COVID-19 symptoms prior to leaving the facility.
5. Families must sign a copy of and abide by home visit guidelines before a person's pass is approved.
6. Families picking up the client must have their temperature taken and be screened for COVI-19 symptoms. Anyone with a fever equal to or greater than 100.0 degrees Fahrenheit, cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, myalgia, chills or new onset of loss of taste or smell will be discouraged from taking the client. If the family decides to proceed with the home visit, the family must provide proof of a negative COVID-19 test result before the client can be returned to the facility.

7. When family arrives, they must remain in their vehicle and call the number provided by the social worker to notify of their arrival. The facility staff will bring the client to the family.
8. Family members and clients must follow universal masking and social distancing while on the facility premises.
9. The facility will request that the client joining the person in the community **always** wear a mask while with the client.
10. Family members and clients must follow good hand hygiene procedures, including frequent use of alcohol-based hand sanitizer when soap and water is not available.
11. Family members will be required to keep a log of the client's activities in the community to allow for contact tracing purposes if any community outbreaks occur in businesses or places the client visited.
12. Upon return to the facility, the family's temperature must be taken.
13. Families must remain in their vehicle and call the unit to notify of their arrival. Staff will come and get the client.
14. The client will be screened for COVID-19 symptoms prior to returning to their unit.
15. The facility will continue to conduct daily symptom screenings with the client upon return to the facility.
16. Returning clients will be encouraged to quarantine in a specified location, and practice social distancing as much as possible at the facility for 14 days after their return.
17. Returning clients will be encouraged to practice social distancing as much as possible and as tolerated, universal masking when outside of their room.
18. The facility will practice cohorting of clients who come and go from the facility if at all possible.